



Office of
the Mayor

Year in Review - 2012

People ask me all the time how I like being mayor. My answer is pretty much always the same, "I love it!" There is a lot of excitement in the air, good energy in Waterville, and many people asking to get involved, including lots of young ones. We've got great bones in this city and I'm having fun helping to build on them and promoting the great things going on here.

It's hard to choose just 10 but here are my Top 10 highlights for the year (in alphabetical order because I couldn't choose any other way.)

Airport

One of my first priorities was to make renovate the airport. I loved working with the staff and volunteers to do that. It has the potential to generate a significant amount of revenue for the city by selling jet fuel and services. This past fiscal year, the airport lost \$5,000 instead of the \$139,000 it had the previous year. I expect it will only get better. The [inside has been renovated, the outside painted and cleaned up](#) and on Dec. 10th, it was [AVWeb's FBO of the week!](#)

Not only has the airport been brought back to life, 60 acres surrounding it have been purchased by the City and the Waterville Development Corporation. The land has been designated as a Foreign Free Trade Zone, meaning parts brought in to manufacture goods don't have duty costs until the finished product is sold. The land is perfect for light industrial manufacturing and Darryl Sterling at the Central Maine Growth Council is hard at work marketing it.

Common Street Arts

Love, love, love the new gallery (where I've bought many presents including a lot for myself!) and the energy it has brought to downtown. Thanks to the hard work of Shannon Haines and Sharon Corwin among many others, the Maine Arts Commission awarded only 1 of 2 \$50,000 *Creative Communities = Economic Development* grants to Waterville. There have been openings, musical events, workshops, lectures and art classes for children and adults all year and I hope all of us will support the continuation of this amazing venue, which is providing an enriched quality of life to our city.

Downtown

There has been a net gain of 6 new businesses in downtown Waterville. To any business in Waterville, not just downtown, the City is offering a free page linked from the City's home page to promote itself. It's easy to fill out and if you own a business you can check it out [here](#).



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Eustis Parkway, Water and Gold streets and Main Street railroad crossing paved

Even though I had nothing to do with it, I couldn't be happier that Mark Turner and the Public Works crew were able to negotiate with the railroad to get the crossing fixed and many streets paved! Looking forward to more in 2013.

Laurie Lachance installed as new Thomas President

I couldn't have been happier to hear the wise decision made by the Thomas College Board of Trustees to appoint Laurie Lachance as their new president. Laurie, formerly the state's economist and most recently Director of the Maine Development Foundation, is now actively engaged in creating a vibrant college community and she connects the importance of early brain development to students' success in school and life. She has agreed to be the Chair of Central Maine Educare and is a passionate speaker on how investing in early childhood = economic development. In January, she and I will be hosting the MDF's Legislative bus tour's stop at Thomas. It's another chance to impress on legislators the importance of quality care and education from birth as the best way to have students reading at grade level, improving graduation rates and reducing the costs of special education.

Maine Film Center

Waterville has an incredible wealth of film resources, including one of the most well-known art house cinemas in the country, an internationally known film festival, and a new Cinema Studies Program at Colby College. Many thanks to Bro Adams, the President of Colby and Shannon Haines for working to bring these resources together in a strategic way to firmly establish Waterville as a vibrant center of film exhibition and education.

Mayors' Coalition

One of the first calls I made after being elected was to Portland's Mayor-elect Michael Brennan to find out if there was a coalition of mayors who would fight for local issues at the Legislature. I'm happy to say, there now is one and we are 10 mayors focused on jobs and economic development. We have testified at Legislative hearings and met with Commissioners to make the case for supporting the areas that generate 35% of the state's sales and will play an active part this year in trying to restore full funding for revenue sharing, education funding, and support for bonds that will provide economic stimulus.

Opera House

After being closed for renovations, the Waterville Opera House is open and stunningly beautiful. If you haven't been to a show there, get a ticket and enjoy both the production and the surroundings.



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Police station underway

After months of listening, exploring alternative sites, and negotiating, the new police station is underway at the site that was actually the first choice of the planning committee! The building should be ready to move into next summer.

Quarry Road

If you haven't been out to the Quarry Road Recreation Area make a New Year's Resolution to go. It is an amazing system of 12 kilometers of trails for biking, hiking, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, walking, sledding and just generally enjoying time outside in a beautiful setting. Thanks to the tireless efforts of many people, the vision that John Koons started with three years ago is being created. Snowmaking, the only recreational area in the state besides Fort Kent to have it for cross country skiing, is scheduled to start this winter.

My new goal for this year is to convince the right people that Waterville needs its own economic development director. I understand the need for regional growth and support the work of the Central Maine Growth Council. Waterville, however, as the service center of the region with lots of demands on it needs someone focusing on bringing more revenue sources to the city. I've been doing lots of that work on my own but it shouldn't be left to whoever happens to be mayor. The areas on which I believe we need an economic development director to focus include:

- 1) Working with the Waterville Development Corp on its priority of addressing blighted buildings;
- 2) Working to fill up the Hathaway complex, help find investors for the Lockwood Mill and get the traffic at the bottom of Main Street to be pedestrian friendly;
- 3) Implementing the business plan being developed for the airport itself;
- 4) Marketing Waterville; and,
- 5) Supporting the growing arts and culture sector of the city.

I'm excited about the coming year and I hope to see lots more people engaging in building community and developing our economic resources. One concrete step I encourage anyone who has an hour or two to spare is to share that hour by reading to students at Educare, at the George J. Mitchell School and/or at the Library. I guarantee you, you will feel loved and you will be making a difference in many children's lives.

Best wishes for a happy, healthy, prosperous 2013,

